



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Mrs Brenda Hale  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan  
Mr David McIlveen  
Mr Stephen Moutray  
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Michael Copeland  
Ms Megan Fearon

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team - for item 1 only)

*The meeting began in closed session at 2.02 pm.*

**1. NIPSO Bill**

*Mr Alyn Hicks joined the meeting at 2.03pm.*

The Committee noted a briefing on a proposal to allow the Ombudsman to act as a Complaints Standards Authority, which included detail on the operation of this mechanism in Scotland.

*Mrs Hale joined the meeting at 2.04pm.*

*Mr Maskey joined the meeting at 2.05pm.*

*Mr Attwood joined the meeting at 2.19pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a preliminary view from the Drafter on how this provision might be included in the context of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill; a view from the current Ombudsman on how this proposal might be managed in the absence of any extra financial resources; and a view from the Department on the financial implications of the proposal, and the anticipated impact on other departments and statutory agencies should a Complaints Standards Authority function be added to the role of the Public Services Ombudsperson.

The Committee noted draft amendments arising from advice of the Examiner of Statutory Rules to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to share the draft amendments with the Ad Hoc Committee and the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered advice from the Drafter on a number of issues that had been raised with the Ad Hoc Committee by the Office of Legislative Counsel through the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a proposed amendment to Clause 2(2) (qualifying the independence of the Ombudsperson), noting Sinn Féin's continued opposition to the power of removal of the Ombudsperson vested in Her Majesty referred to in the proposed amendment.

*Agreed:* The test for the exercise of discretion in clauses 4, 26 and 28 should be "*if there are special circumstances which make it proper to do so*".

*Agreed:* The Committee considered again the issues raised regarding clause 40 and was content with the clause as drafted.

*Agreed:* The Committee would request an amendment to Schedule 6 to provide that the Assembly Commission, rather than the Assembly, may direct the NIJAO as to the content of his/her report.

*Agreed:* Schedule 7, and the new section 63 to be inserted in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 ("2014 Act") would be amended to clarify that only the specific listed powers and provisions of the Ombudsperson Bill would apply to investigations under the 2014 Act.

*Mr Hicks left the meeting at 3.03pm.*

Consultation on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation (Age Goods, Facilities and Services)

*Mrs Hale left the meeting 3.04pm.*

The Deputy Chairperson advised Members that an embargoed copy of the OFMDFM consultation on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation with regard to goods, facilities and services had been circulated to Members via email prior to the meeting; and advised that the document was embargoed until its launch at 11am on Friday 3 July.

*The meeting moved into open session at 3.05 pm.*

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

**3. Chairperson's Business**

Parenting NI

The Committee Chairperson informed the Committee that an informal meeting with Parenting NI had been arranged for Monday 6 July at 10.30am. Pip Jaffa, Chief Executive of Parenting NI, will be joined by Charlene Brooks, Director of Parenting Education.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to notify staff of their availability to attend.

Carnegie UK Trust and Queens University

The Committee noted a request from Carnegie UK Trust and Queens University to brief the Committee on the work of the Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland and their Report 'Towards a wellbeing Framework.'

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the autumn.

Electronic Committee Packs

The Committee noted that following summer recess, with the exception of confidential papers, all meetings packs will be provided through the Electronic Committee Pack system only.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

#### **4. Draft Minutes of the meetings held on 24 June 2015**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 24 June 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

##### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

#### **6. Correspondence**

##### The Commissioner for Public Appointments NI

The Committee noted the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15.

##### Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment suggesting that the Committee Chairperson may wish to participate in the plenary debate on its Inquiry into growing the economy and creating jobs with lower corporation tax.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Committee Clerk would liaise with the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, providing a short report on the benefits of a recent visit of that Committee to the work of the ONIEB, and the benefits to the Committee of the participation of the office in its visit to the Stuttgart Region.

##### OFMDFM Budget 2015/16

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM regarding the OFMDFM budget for 2015/16.

##### Amnesty International & SAVIA: Proposed Victims Redress Scheme

The Committee noted correspondence from Amnesty International and SAVIA outlining proposed ways forward on the issue of redress for the victims of historical institutional child abuse; and raising concerns about the position in respect of those who fall outside the remit of the current Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry. The Committee noted that the correspondence included a request to brief the Committee on these issues.

*Mrs Hale returned to the meeting at 3.13pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to OFMDFM for comment with a request that the response is provided for consideration on return after summer recess.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to raise the issues highlighted by Amnesty International and SAVIA with the First Minister and deputy First Minister during the briefing scheduled for 16 September.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer consideration of inviting Amnesty International and SAVIA to provide a briefing on the issues raised until a response had been received from the Department.

Mr Attwood indicated that he was not content with these proposals.

### Strategic Investment Board

The Committee noted the Strategic Investment Board Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15.

The Committee also noted the latest Investment Strategy Procurement Activity report for OFMDFM.

## **7. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted a draft Forward Work Programme for September 2015.

## **8. Children's Services Co-operation Bill.**

The Committee considered the final draft of its Report on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill. The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 1 - 7 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 8 - 16 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 17 - 19 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 20 - 25 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 26 - 32 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 33 - 36 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 37 - 39 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 40 - 41 of the report.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to add “The Committee noted that amendments proposed by the Department will require the support of the wider Executive” to paragraph 45.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 42 – 56 of the report as amended.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 57 - 59 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 60 - 64 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 65 - 68 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 69 - 71 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 72 - 74 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 75 - 77 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 78 - 79 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 80 - 81 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Executive Summary.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of appendices to be included in the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Deputy Chairperson should approve the relevant extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in Appendix 1 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be the Fourteenth Report of the Committee, and ordered the report to be printed and published.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to lay a typescript copy of the Report in the Business Office; and to issue a typescript copy to the Bill Sponsor, and the Department in advance of its formal publication.

## **9. European issues**

The Committee noted a written briefing from OFMDFM on the Executive’s Strategic EU Priorities for 2015/16; and that an oral briefing on the 2015/2016 priorities and an update on the implementation of the 2014/15 is scheduled for September 2015.

*Mr Spratt left the meeting at 3.41pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to share the Executive's Strategic EU Priorities for 2015/16 with all statutory committees.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to OFMDFM to request a response to its letter of 18 June following a briefing on matters relating to progress against Programme for Government targets, which included a request for information on whether the new PfG reporting mechanism was ratified by Ministers and if it has been adopted by other Departments.

*Mr Moutray left the meeting at 3.42pm.*

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

*The meeting moved into closed session at 3.43 pm.*

## **11. Inquiry into Building a United Community**

The Committee considered the final draft of its Report on its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 1 - 21 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 22 - 27 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 28 - 31 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 32 - 42 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 43 - 47 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 48 - 60 of the report.

*Agreed:* Members noted that a line had been inadvertently deleted from the initial draft report that had been considered on 24 June and agreed that it would be reinserted at paragraph 63.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 61 - 69 of the report as amended.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 70 - 75 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 76 - 80 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 81 - 100 of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to substitute "groups" for "communities including women and young people" at paragraph 108.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 101- 114 of the report as amended.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 115 - 121 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 122 - 124 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 125 - 131 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 132 - 138 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to substitute “closest to” for “in the shadow of” at paragraph 152; and to add “for everyone, and in particular young people” to the end of that paragraph.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 139 - 152 of the report as amended.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 153 - 162 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 163 - 171 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 172 - 180 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed paragraphs 181 - 187 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Executive Summary.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of appendices to be included in the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Deputy Chairperson should approve the relevant extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in Appendix 1 of the report.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be the fifteenth Report of the Committee, and ordered the report to be printed and published.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to lay a typescript copy of the Report in the Business Office; and to issue a typescript copy to the Department, with a request to respond to the key conclusions and recommendations contained in the report within 12 weeks.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to table the following motion for a debate on the Report in the next Assembly session:
- “That this Assembly notes the Report of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (NIA 257/11-15) on its Inquiry into Building a United Community;*



*and calls on the First Minister and deputy First Minister, along with their Executive colleagues, to implement the recommendations contained in the Report”.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request that the debate be scheduled for the week commencing 28 September to coincide with Community Relations Week.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to embargo the Report until the debate in Plenary.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to share an embargoed copy of the Executive Summary and Key Conclusions and Recommendations with other statutory committees, given that the Inquiry has looked at a cross-cutting issue and the report includes a recommendation for other Committees.

## **12. Date, Time and Location of next meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 2 September 2015.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.02 pm.*

**Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister**